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# Gastritis.

The importance of the functions of the Stomach and the extensive dominion which it exercises over the whole animal economy render its diseases in the highest degree interesting. The office which it performs and its extended sympathies expose this viscus to a variety of disorders, and that which stands among the first in importance is Gastritis.

In the first place, it may not be improper or unconnected, to take a general view of the anatomical structure of the organ in which is seated the disease we are about to consider.

This apparently membranous sac is situated nearly transversely in the abdomen. It is of an oblong ~~curved~~ figure much

larger at one extremity, than the other. The greater extremity of the stomach is placed in the left Hypochondriac and the smaller in the Epigastric region under the left lobe of the liver. In the larger end there is an orifice, through which it re= =ceives food from the Oesophagus, and this is called Cardia. At the lower and smaller extremity it has an aperture which com= =municates with the Duodenum, and this is called Pylorus.

This latter foramen is surrounded by a Circular septum formed by a fold of the two innermost coats of the stomach.

The body of the stomach has two Curvatures, the greater, ~~which~~ extends downwards from one opening to the other; and the smaller is also between the two orifices, but above and behind, and owing to this curved form we find that both orifices of the Stomach

are in the epigastric region. The Stomach is composed of four coats; the external is strong and firm, formed of a reflexion of the Peri=toneum by which it is connected to the Liver, Spleen, Colon, Diaphragm, and other parts. The next coat is the muscular; in contact with this we have the nervous; and the inner=most and last is the villous, or fungous as it is sometimes called from the granulated appearance which it sometimes presents. This inner coat we generally find covered with a mucous which is produced by its own secretory organs. The Stomach is sup=plied with nerves and bloodvessels like other organs of the body.

Inflammation of the Stomach has been divided by Cullen into Phlegmonic and Erythematic.

Erythematic inflammation of the stomach, is generally an attendant op

Malignant Fever. The following remarks will be confined to the consideration of the Phlegmonic species.

Various predisposing and exciting causes occasion this, as happens in other cases of inflammation. And among the chief of those which predispose to the disease, plethora may be esteemed as exerting much influence.

The first and most powerful exciting cause, is cold applied to the surface generally, or producing local irritation by its immediate contact with the stomach, as for instance, cold drinks, and especially ice water, drank when the body is overheated, producing effects more active and instantaneous.

Acrid, stimulating, or poisonous substances swallowed; blows, overdistention from food, indigestible food, and repelled

Exanthemata or Gout are also frequent exciting causes of this disease.

The disease then produced is characterized by an acute ~~flaming~~ pain in the region of the stomach, which is increased by the reception of any thing into it, by motion or external pressure. The pain is not in all cases confined to the Epigastric region, but in some instances extends to the false ribs, and back. There is great prostration of power, the pulse is small, hard and corded and not very quick in the commencement - great irritability of the stomach with copious vomiting - great thirst. As the disease advances the symptoms increase in violence - and there are extreme soreness, anxiety, and oppression at the præcordia. - Obstinate constipation, tension about the Epigastric & umbilical region - wild eye - delirium

- lank, haggard countenance - a feeble and almost imperceptible pulse & occasionally vomiting of dark matter - a greater and more sudden depression of strength than we commonly meet with in other diseases, with faintings and hurried respiration, cold clammy sweats, hiccough, and finally death.

As in many other diseases we have here also anomalous cases, sometimes we have Hydrophobic symptoms, at others we have no signs denoting the existence of the disease. Dr Chapman relates cases in which it attacked the great too similar to Podagra - a spasmodic contraction of the muscles of the arm and an inflammation in the groin have been mentioned by Dr Physick as delusive symptoms &c -

The various terminations of other

inflammation have likewise been ascribed to Gastritis, owing to the acute sensibility and the unlimited connexion of the stomach with the rest of the system, it is natural to suppose that any thing calculated to excite this excessive irritability will not allow time for suppuration, but will, unless speedily removed, act more immediately on the system and occasion death.

The first and great indication in the treatment of this disease is to effect a resolution of the inflammation, as soon as possible, and a tendency to this is known by the remarkable mildness of the symptoms and their yielding to the proper remedies. And should this favourable termination be produced we have some critical evacuation either by perspiration, diarrhœa, or urine and the disease is thus stopt short.

But on the contrary if an uncommon severity of the symtoms exist in the onset, and they continue longer than usual, and there is no evident disposition to a solution after the application of the most powerful & efficient remedies, we must be prepared to expect the worst.

Dissection generally shows some appearance of inflammation either in the whole or some part of the stomach: the degree of inflammation will commonly be proportionate to the cause of the disease. It sometimes appears in streaks, stellated spots; or through the entire lining membrane there is a suffusion or inflammatory blush with an effusion of coagulable lymph spread over the internal surface of the stomach, in general we find a red colour and a repleted and distended state of the bloodvessels. In some cases erosions and ulcerations of the stomach;

The principal and most conspicuous symptoms of Gastritis are so distinct and well marked that it will not probably be confounded with any other complaint, but those in which there is probably much necessity for the practitioner to use much discrimination in distinguishing it are Colic, and Enteritis, from the first it may be known by the pain in Colic, being in the lower part of the abdomen, by the kind of pain, and by the pulse being much more full and strong, and the febrile symptoms not being so great.

The seat of the pain and its not being much increased on pressure are the principal diagnostics between this disease and Enteritis.

The great indication (as before remarked) in the treatment of Gastritis is to reduce inflammatory action, and the most

immediate and effectual means of lessening this action is Bloodletting. A just estimate of the value of this remedy will easily be conceived, if we reflect that the disease is an acute inflammation of an organ, the most excitable and delicate in its nature; and that unless we are possessed of some such prompt and efficient means of arresting its progress, the patient must in a short time fall a victim to its violence. To obtain the fullest and most beneficial results from this remedy we must without regard to the pulse, attack the complaint with fearless intrepidity — taking away twenty or thirty ounces of blood, to be repeated in a very short time, if the indication still continues. In a majority of cases in which bleeding is used, its apparent

effect is to diminish arterial action, - in that now under consideration it serves to increase and give natural action to the pulse, and thus, the complaint is developed, and from this circumstance we may judge of the advantage which we have derived from its employment. Small and repeated bleedings have been recommended, but to this, I will merely observe, that we had better permit nature alone to relieve herself, than to be too sparing of our art in her assistance.

Topical bleeding constitutes the next most important measure in the treatment of this disease. - To be followed by a large blister over the stomach. The beneficial effects of blisters are more unequivocally displayed in no case than in Gastritis. But in the application

of this remedy there is a caution to be observed in this as in other cases, which is emphatically given by Dr. Chapman "Never" says he "recur to blisters in diseases of "higher grades of action, till in some degree "reduced by venesection and other depleting "measures". It will naturally occur to us that the blister should be applied as near the seat of the disease as possible. Fomentations may also be applied with no small degree of benefit. It is a great object from the commencement of this complaint to calm the irritation of the stomach which is so excessive, that it generally precludes the exhibition of any medicine, except those used as palliatives of this symptom, at the same time it is necessary to remove costiveness, which is almost a universal attendant; and to effect this we must resort to Enemata, used frequently and in large

quantities, composed of the mildest articles.
To allay the irritability of the stomach we must appeal to the usual remedies, as lime-water & milk - the effervescent draught, in small and repeated doses. The warm bath, hot fomentations and anodyne injections. After the stomach is in a condition to retain the proper remedies for the purpose, it is necessary to evacuate the alimentary canal. And here we should have recourse to Calomel, as it appears peculiarly adapted to the case, on account of its being retained when almost every other medicine would be rejected.
Epsom salts appear also to be admirably suited to the same view, and in many cases in which Calomel has failed, the most beneficial results may be obtained from the use of the Epsom salts.
Thirst which is usually very great

should be alleviated by the mildest fluids, given frequently, and in small quantities, as, bold balm tea - seltzer water &c Milk has been recommended and Dr Chapman speaks well of a solution of Liquorice in cases of this nature.

Diet when necessary for the support of strength, should be regulated on the same principle, - it should be light, being of the most simple nature, as, Demulcent drinks &c

In the last stage of this disease we find it necessary to support and invigorate the system. And here the most active and diffusible stimuli are indicated, and among the most useful is the Spirits of Turpentine employed externally and internally, and opium. To these every thing else calculated to meet the same indication should be added.

In the convalescence the utmost care is necessary to prevent a relapse, the diet should be simple and of the most diges=tible articles. Stimulants of every descrip=tion are to be scrupulously avoided, And we should particularly guard against patients against taking cold, by making them wear flannel if the weather re=quires it, and especially by protecting the feet.

Our resources in the treatment of Gastritis are much limited and unless it is subverted in its onset by the most energetic depletory measures, our utmost exertions will prove unsuccessful. If on the contrary we have, in the commence=ment of its rapid career, assailed it with our most efficient resources, our efforts in a majority of cases will be attended with that reward, of all others the most

pleasing to the Physician, the recovery of his Patient.

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